

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ACDA-07 IO-13

MCT-01 /071 W

-----301404Z 052272 /50

O R 301123Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3491

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1416

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MILI, LE

SUBJECT: CHAMOUN DECIDES TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY

REF: (A) BEIRUT 1397, (B) BEIRUT 1402

1. SUMMARY: HARDLINE CHRISTIAN LEADERS HAVE CALLED OFF THEIR STRIKE PROTESTING THE REMOVAL OF ARMY COMMANDER HANNA SAID, ALTHOUGH AS OF EARLY MARCH 30 NOT ALL THEIR FOLLOWERS HAD GOTTEN THE WORD. AT YARZE, BRIGADIER VICTOR KHOURY TOOK COMMAND IN UNEVENTFUL CEREMONY. THE IMMEDIATE CRISIS APPEARS TO HAVE PASSED. END SUMMARY.

2. CHRISTIAN HARDLINERS BLINK. IN ADDITION TO PIERRE GEMAYEL'S CLEAR PUBLIC DISASSOCIATION FROM THE CHAMOUN/ BECHIR GEMAYEL HARDLINE (REFTTEL), WE UNDERSTAND THAT PRESIDENT SARKIS AND FOREIGN/DEFENSE MINISTER BOUTROS
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USED A NUMBER OF INDIRECT PRIVATE CHANNELS, PARTICULARLY NLP VICE PRESIDENT KAZIM AL KHALIL, TO PERSUADE CAMILLE CHAMOUN TO CALL OFF THE HARDLINERS' GENERAL STRIKE. HARDLINERS ARE BACKING OFF AS GRACEFULLY AS POSSIBLE: DORY CHAMOUN AS NLP SECRETARY GENERAL ISSUED STATEMENT EVENING OF MARCH 29 PUBLISHED IN AL AMAL WHICH THANKED THOSE WHO SUPPORTED THE EARLIER STRIKE CALL (WHICH THE STATEMENT EXPLICITLY ACKNOW-

LEDGED), SAID GOL AUTHORITIES WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RESULTS OF THEIR DECISION, AND CALLED OF THE STRIKE SINE DIE. TANZIM LEADER GEORGE ADWAN, AFTER A MEETING OF THE LEBANESE FRONT "JOINT COMMAND," ASSOCIATED HIMSELF WITH THE STATE-MENT. BECHIR GEMAYEL, ACCORDING TO L'ORIENT-LE JOUR, DENIED THAT THE JOINT COMMAND HAD EVER CALLED FOR A STRIKE.

3. MODERATES TRY TO PATCH QUARREL. PIERRE GEMAYEL AND CAMILLE CHAMOUN REPORTEDLY MET BRIEFLY AFTER THE FUNERAL OF PHALANGE VICE PRESIDENT JOSEPH CHADER, MARCH 29, AFTER WHICH THE PHALANGE PRESS AGENCY SAID THEY AGREED ON THE NEED TO CLOSE RANKS. THE LEBANESE FRONT "DIRECTORATE" WILL MEET APRIL 1. PIERRE ALSO TRIED TO SMOOTH RUFFLED FEATHERS BY TELLING THE PRESS THAT THE FRONT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE HANDBILLS DISTRIBUTED, "WHICH LACKED AUTHENTIC SIGNATURE."

4. MINOR LINGERING TROUBLES. WE HAVE UNCONFIRMED REPORTS THAT THERE WAS SOME BRAWLING BETWEEN NLP AND PHALANGIST STUDENTS EARLY MARCH 29, AND ONE GRENADE WAS THROWN. EVEN AFTER THE NEW NLP POSITION EMERGED, SOME CHRISTIANS WERE SLOW IN GETTING THE WORD. AS OF EARLY MARCH 30, SOME SHOPS IN EAST BEIRUT WERE STILL CLOSED. FEELINGS ARE STILL AROUSED, AND RUMORS ARE CIRCULATING THAT MORE CONTROVERSIAL APPOINTMENTS BY THE GOVERNMENT COULD RESULT IN RENEWED STREET ACTION.

5. SMOOTH TRANSITION AT YARZE.

A TRANSITION CEREMONY WAS HELD AT ARMY HEADQUARTERS AT YARZE MORNING OF MARCH 30, WITH BOTH HANNA SAID AND CONFIDENTIAL

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VICTOR KHOURY PRESENT AND IN GOOD HUMOR. KHOURY SAID: "WE KNOW THE SITUATION IS DELICATE, BUT WE WILL HAVE, WITH GOD'S HELP, AN ARMY." THERE WILL BE A FAREWELL CEREMONY FOR SAID MARCH 30. THE PRESS GIVES HEAVY COVERAGE TO NUMEROUS STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT FOR THE KHOURY APPOINTMENT BY BOTH CHRISTIANS AND MOSLEMS--THE LATTER INCLUDING SUNNI FIGURE CHAFIC WAZZAN AND SHIA LEADER IMAM MOUSSA SADR, AS WELL AS THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE LEFTIST NATIONAL MOVEMENT.

6. BOMB AT HOME OF FUAD BOUTROS. THE OFFICE OF PROSECUTOR GENERAL CAMILLE GEAGEA HAS ENTERED THE CASE, BUT NO FURTHER INFORMATION HAS APPEARED ON WHO PLANTED THE BOMB (REFTTEL B). PRESS NOTES MESSAGES OF SYMPATHY TO BOUTROS FROM VARIOUS QUARTERS, INCLUDING LETTER FROM ACTING SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER. BOUTROS COMMENTED TO AMBASSADOR THAT, AFTER BOMBING INCIDENT, GOL HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO GO AHEAD AND DEPOSE SAID.

7. COMMENT: THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT HAS CLEARLY COME OUT
ON TOP AFTER THIS ROUND WITH THE CHAMOUN CAMP, BUT IT IS
NOT THE LAST ROUND.
PARKER

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Drafter: n/a
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